In the early days, most of the work carried out by the Government in respect of British shipping, fell to the Admiralty. The Transport Depart-

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ment of the Admiralty was responsible for chartering the vessels necessary to carry our forces to France, Egypt and subsequently the Dardanelles and other theatres of war in Asia and East Africa, and to maintain them with food, munitions, and reinforcements.

The developments of naval warfare also involved a very extensive requisitioning of small craft to act as auxiliaries to the Fleet—for patrol work, minesweeping and message-carrying. Some 1,720 yachts, trawlers, drifters, and motor-boats were secured as auxiliaries for use in home waters within the first ten months of the War. In addition, a number of merchant vessels were converted into armed mer-chant cruisers.

It must also be pointed out that although Britain owned so large a share of the world's shipping, this country did so much sea carriage for other countries that when the War broke out her shipping was not sufficient to meet our own home needs. A third of the merchant trade done with this country was in goods carried in foreign vessels. Of the imports which reached us in 1913, only 65 per cent, were brought in British bottoms. The shipping problem was thus accentuated on two sides.

Let us examine first of all the vastly

increased demands on shipping, owing to the War. There was the immense and continually growing task of transporting men, animals, stores of all kinds from this country to the various fields of war. Like most other services, those of the Army Sea Transport grew beyond all

*War tasks of British shipping*